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FACT SHEET: ASTHMA IN NEW JERSEY PRESCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

About asthma

- Asthma is a serious and chronic disease that is marked by swelling in the airways.
- Symptoms of asthma include shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing and chest tightness.
- Asthma symptoms can be triggered by:
 - tobacco smoke, allergies, illness, acid reflux, exercise, some medications, strong odors, weather conditions, some foods, and strong emotions,
 - allergens from dust, air pollution, cockroaches, rodents, pets, mold, pollen, smoke from burning wood or grass.
- Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled.
- Uncontrolled asthma can lead to emergency department visits, hospitalization and even death.

Asthma prevalence among New Jersey children aged 0-4

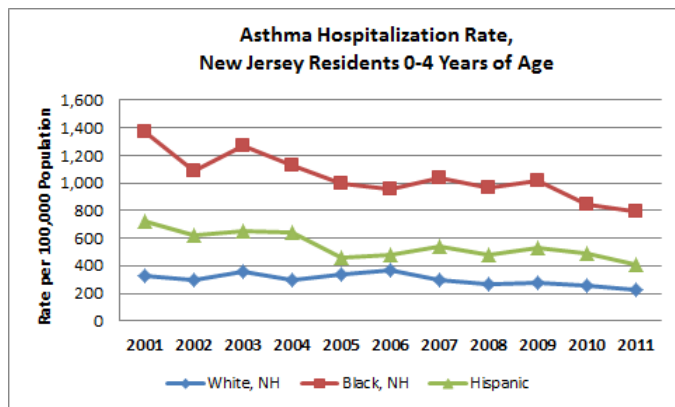
- About 5.6% of New Jersey children aged 0-4 have asthma.
- More preschool-age boys (7.1%) have asthma when compared to preschool-age girls (4.0%).

Treatment of asthma in New Jersey children aged 0-4

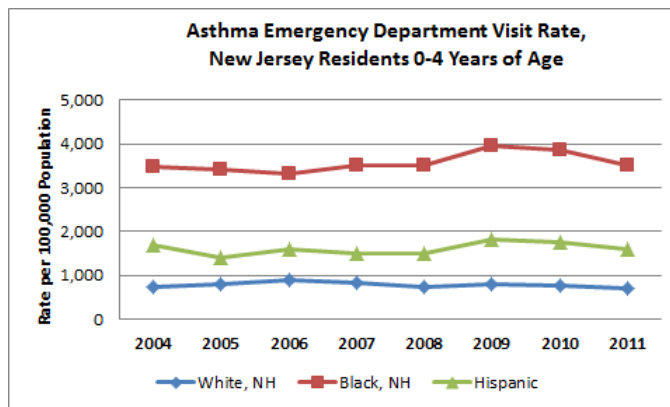
- About 63% of New Jersey preschool aged children with current asthma have been given an asthma treatment plan or asthma action plan by a health professional.
- About 67% of New Jersey preschool aged children with current asthma use prescription medication for their asthma. About 45% use long-term control medications designed to be taken daily to maintain control of asthma symptoms and about 60% use quick relief medications, used to provide fast relief for acute asthma symptoms. About 38% use both types of medications.

Effects of asthma on New Jersey children aged 0-4

- From 2000 to 2008, there were less than five asthma deaths among New Jersey children aged 0-4 (of 949 total in the population—children aged 0-4 had the lowest death rate).
- New Jersey children 0-4 were more likely to be hospitalized (2001-2011) or to have an emergency department (ED) visit for asthma (2004-2011) than any other age group.
- There were racial and ethnic disparities in hospitalizations and ED visits, as shown in the following figures. Black, non-Hispanic children aged 0-4 had the highest rates of asthma hospitalization and ED visits when compared to white, non-Hispanic and Hispanic children.



Data Source: 2001-2011 New Jersey Hospital Discharge Files
Population Source: 2011 Bridged Race Population Estimates



Data Source: 2004-2011 New Jersey ED Discharge Files
Population Source: 2011 Bridged Race Population Estimates

- About 22% of New Jersey children aged 0-4 with current asthma had an ED visit in the past year. Nearly 30% had an urgent doctor visit because of asthma symptoms.
- About 44% of New Jersey children aged 0-4 with current asthma experience activity limitation due to their asthma symptoms.
- About 47% of New Jersey children aged 0-4 have well-controlled asthma. Well-controlled asthma means symptoms on eight or fewer days out of the previous 30 days, difficulty sleeping on two or fewer nights out of the previous 30 days, and no limitation of usual activities due to asthma in the past year.

For more information:

New Jersey Asthma Awareness and Education Program: www.nj.gov/health/asthma

Pediatric Adult Asthma Coalition of New Jersey (PACNJ): www.pacnj.org

Glossary:

Prevalence – Proportion of the population with a condition at a given point in time or over a specified period of time

Lifetime Asthma – Proportion of the population who reports ever having asthma

Current Asthma – Proportion of the population who reports still having asthma at a given point in time

Asthma Action Plan (Asthma Treatment Plan) – Written plan that is prepared by a health provider to help patients and caregivers control asthma

References:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey Data, 2008-2010. <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/> (source for asthma prevalence discussion)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Asthma Call-back Survey Data, 2008-2010. <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/ACBS.htm> (source for discussions on asthma treatment, survey data on ER and urgent doctor visits, activity limitations and asthma control)
- New Jersey Mortality data:
<http://www4.state.nj.us/dhss-shad/query/DeathQueryTechNotes.html>
- New Jersey Hospital Patient Discharge Data:
<http://www.state.nj.us/health/healthcarequality/ub/ub92intro.shtml> (source for hospitalizations and emergency department visits)

Funding for this effort was provided by the CDC Cooperative Agreement entitled *Addressing Asthma from a Public Health Perspective* (5U59EH000491-03). The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of the CDC.